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COUNTRY: Madagascar CIA [REDACTED]

SUBJECT: Agricultural (Crop and Livestock) Improvements/Crop and Veterinary Research DATE 19 January 1954

PLACE ACQUIRED: Madagascar SUPPLEMENT TO: P 25X1A2g

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1. For the past 25 years, the Colonial Government of Madagascar has been conducting experiments in animal husbandry and farm crops in the Androy area in south Madagascar. Up until 1948, these experiments had proven to be unsatisfactory, principally because there has been no cooperation by the natives. After the 1947 revolution in Madagascar, notable progress has been made in research in the agricultural fields. This progress has been due to the Point-Four Program, the coming of Swiss and French immigrants to the area and a program of educating the natives.
2. The program of educating the natives consisted chiefly of getting the natives to give up many of their old ideas of existence. For instance, natives were very reluctant to give up their cattle for slaughter. Their religion, to a degree, forbade this but they also looked upon their cattle as something to have always as a part of the family. Hundreds of oxen-drawn plows of the US type have been given to the natives and instructions of use were also furnished. Only recently during the summer of 1953 have I seen possibly one out of five native farmers use these plows. The spirit of competition, seeing a neighbor get a better crop by using modern methods, has, within the past two or three years, helped in making the change.
3. The headquarters for agricultural research is in Ambovombe and is being conducted on several government farms located in its vicinity. This particular area is reported to be Madagascar's most fertile and productive area for agricultural products.
4. Research in the veterinary department consists principally of improving the strain of beef cattle, sheep and goats. This is being done by the importation of desired strains from other countries. Sheep and goats come principally from Australia and New Zealand. Cattle comes from France and other European countries. On one of the larger government farms, this last summer, I saw one thousand head of fine looking beef cattle ranging from calves and steers ready for the market. Wool from sheep and hair from goats are of fine quality and have a ready market in France and other European countries.
5. As a result of the improvement in quality and quantity of livestock and the cooperation of the native, the Colonial government has expanded and improved their plants at Tulear, which is on the southwestern coast of Madagascar and Antsirabe located about 50 miles southwest of Tananarive. The plant at Tulear is operated by native labor and is subjected to the strictness of government inspection. Most of its products are canned for exports.

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- 6. Heading the crop research is Berard [fnu] who is part native and part French and who received his education in France. His speciality is plant pathology. He is a christian and an anti-Communist. Berard is responsible for much of the new enthusiasm shown by the natives for the improvement of their farms and operations. On the various government farms used for crop research, all of which are located in the vicinity of Ambovombe, strips of various crops are grown. This last summer 1953, I noticed growing on these experimental strips peanuts, corn (seeds from the US) maize, varieties of beans, including castorbeans, and sweet potatoes.
- 7. Experiments in sisal are being conducted by local planters who have joined together for this purpose. Sisal from the Androy area is of long fiber and of excellent quality and has a ready export market.

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Subject  
 Agric. education  
 + research  
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